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"Ghosts in the background" and "The price of the war"

Representations of the Lapland War in Finnish museums

Suzie Thomas & Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto

Abstract: *Museums decide which events and perspectives to privilege over others in their exhibitions. In the context of "difficult" or "dark" histories – in which the subject matter might be painful, controversial or in some other way challenging for one or more community or interest groups to reconcile with – some events may be marginalized or ignored. This may also happen due to official narratives diverting attention to other events that have come to be seen as more "important" or worthy of discussion. We explore the ways that information about the Lapland War (1944–1945) is incorporated into permanent exhibitions at five Finnish museums: the Provincial Museum of Lapland; Siida – the National Museum of the Finnish Sámi; the Gold Prospector Museum; the Military Museum of Finland; and the Finnish Airforce Museum. Despite the significant social and environmental upheavals brought about by the brief but destructive conflict, it seems surprisingly rarely addressed.*[1]

Keywords: Dark heritage, dark tourism, difficult histories, exhibition analysis, Second World War, Lapland War, Sámi heritage, military history.

Over the past few decades, interest has noticeably increased in "dark" or "difficult" history, heritage and tourism. This has impacted academic research, in which we have seen areas of study emerge such as "dark tourism" (e.g. Foley & Lennon 1996, Stone 2006) and "dark heritage" (e.g. McAtackney 2014, Carr & Corbishley 2015, Koskinen-Koivisto & Thomas 2016). Many studies of "dark heritage" have inevitably focused on the material and immaterial legacies of the Second World War, how visitors experience them, and the strategies employed to commemorate, preserve or curate sites connected to this conflict heritage (e.g. Moshenska 2015).

Museums are also tackling "difficult histories" (Bonnell & Simon 2007). This trend has seen emotionally challenging and even taboo topics exhibited, as museums have tried to carve out a relevant and active role

in society and contemporary debates. At the same time, museums continue to be a forum for what society chooses as official history and knowledge (and hence also what goes ignored or underrepresented); they "select, legitimize, marginalize, and are open to contestation and resistance" (Borg & Mayo 2010:35). Thereby museums take part in the construction and deconstruction of collective memory and national narratives (e.g. Bogumił *et al.* 2015, Walsh 2001).

A museum's collection and subject matter affect decisions about what to interpret, and how. For museums that deal with particular communities and aspects of social history, there are certain major events such as the Second World War which are likely to feature in many exhibitions. Susan Crane has noted that this "single largest event-complex/complex event in the living memory of our eldest generations, of world-shaping significance, continues to figure most prominently in public memory work" (1997:58). At the same time, for Germany in particular, but other countries too (the USA in relation to the *Enola Gay,* for example), the continuing process of coming to terms with this history, and reconciling state culpability for atrocities, has meant that "museum exhibits about this period carry an extraordinary burden of responsibility" (Crane 1997:58). This is also an issue for countries that allied with or were occupied by Germany in the Second World War, challenged with framing their national identities and narratives in the aftermath (Stenius *et al.* 2011:9).

Tarja Värynen has commented on how many nations require "post-war closure", noting that the "post-war national anxiety creates sealed national memoryscape where all residual historical context is shunned away" (Väyrynen 2014:220). The Italian resistance movement (rather than the more problematic history of Italy's Fascism and alliance with Nazi Germany), for example, became central to Italy's "post-war identity [...] celebrated through all kinds of 'official' media, histories, memorials and formal education" (De Nardi 2014:449). Kevin Walsh has suggested that national and state-run museums have been reluctant to interpret the history of the French Resistance, as this would necessitate also acknowledging collaboration by civil servants and other with the Nazis (Walsh 2001). Nordic countries such as Norway, Denmark and Sweden have been dealing with the trauma of not providing a forceful defence or indeed not contributing to the defeat of Nazism (notwithstanding the resistance movements) (Stenius *et al.* 2011:12). Finland's case was different, as a co-belligerent rather than an occupied territory, but it was nevertheless traumatic.

Finland and the Second World War

Finland has arguably adopted a "narrative of 'the morally immaculate nation in a non-ideological war of self defence'", as "an essential element of the national imagery":

> Particularly, the years 1939–1944, with two consecutive wars against the Soviet Union and one against Nazi-Germany were a formative collective experience that would be summoned up and recalled in numerous films and novels and, to some extent, in family tradition also decades afterwards (Löfström 2011:98).

Framed in this context, it is reasonable to expect to find coverage of Second World War conflicts generally, and also the Lapland War (the "one against Nazi-Germany") as part of the formation of Finland's national story and identity. However, there has been criticism in both Norway and Finnish Lapland "of national

histories that erase the consequences of the Lapland War and the reconstruction period" (Lehtola 2015:126). In spite of this there is continued Finnish public interest in the Second World War generally, and arguably increased popular awareness of the Lapland War recently (for example through the best-selling novel *Kätilö,* 2011, and the subsequent film, 2015, by Katja Kettu).

The most significant of the three wars for the "official" national narrative has been the 1939–1940 Winter War[2] (Paasi 1997:47). In the Second World War, Finland was a small nation situated both geographically and politically between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. After the Winter War, Finns believed that it would not be long before conflict started again. Since the early 20th century, Finland had had a close relationship with Germany, and as part of Operation Barbarossa – the German attack on the Soviet Union – German troops began arriving in Finland (Seitsonen & Herva 2011:177). From late 1940, some 200,000 German troops came to be based in Finland, mostly in the north. The German presence in Lapland, under *Generaloberst* (colonel general) Eduard Dietl, was relatively harmonious with locals until late 1944. In October 1944, Finland's treaty with the Soviet Union required Finland to declare war on Germany (Korppi-Tommola 2008:445). What was first a "pretend" war escalated into actual war (the Lapland War, 1944–1945) with considerable devastation in northern Finland (Tuominen 2005). Retreating German troops adopted "scorched earth" tactics. While casualties were relatively low, material losses were high (Seitsonen & Herva 2011:177).

Finland's position during the Second World War resulted in conflicting perspectives and experiences. Some Finns have had difficulties in acknowledging the close alliance with Nazi Germany (Herva 2014:300, Väyrynen 2014:224), while there are also positive recollections of interactions with German soldiers before the Lapland War (although see Väyrynen 2014 concerning the role of women – especially those who fraternized with German soldiers, the perceived moral threat this behaviour posed, and reactions from the Finnish state). This seemingly "harmonious phase" in Lapland was presented in the temporary exhibition *Wir waren Freunde / Olimme ystäviä* (in English *We Were Friends*) at the Provincial Museum of Lapland (April 2015 to January 2016).

Analysing museum exhibitions

We discuss the representation and interpretation of the Lapland War in five museums in Finland (fig. 1). We selected our museums partly for their geographical locations, and partly for their subject matter. Three of our case study museums are located in Lapland itself: the Provincial Museum of Lapland; Siida – The National Museum of the Finnish Sámi; and the Gold Prospector Museum. We also analysed the Military Museum of Finland and the Finnish Airforce Museum. Each of these museums has a different type of governance, and different key themes, although all are broadly speaking historical museums (Table 1).

The three Lapland-based museums were selected partly due to their locations mirroring the primary case study areas for the larger Academy of Finland–funded project *Lapland's Dark Heritage*[3] (from which this article stems), and partly due to the different perspectives they represent. The destructive "scorched earth" tactics that the retreating German military employed affected both cities and isolated structures, and all communities in the region were deeply affected, in many cases also by the

trauma of evacuation to Southern Finland or Northern Sweden (Tuominen 2005), or forced migration from Soviet-ceded territory.

We focus primarily on the *permanent* exhibitions, and therefore the extent to which the Lapland War is a permanent feature (or not) of the narratives presented to visitors. Although at the time of researching the Provincial Museum of Lapland featured *Wir waren Freunde*, we do not cover this exhibition due to its temporary nature. We visited each of the exhibitions in 2015, documenting any mention of the Lapland War that we found in the permanent exhibition areas. We made notes, and where permitted also took photographs (fig. 2–3).

David Carr has noted that museums may be considered as an "open system" in which visitors are invited to participate in the process of experiencing and making meaning from the exhibition, incorporating their "history as a learner, a repertoire of private memory, a scheme of the world, a self-designed desire to become different" (Carr 2001:178). Thus each museum experience is unique, and necessarily tied to personal background, the context of the visit (for example does one visit alone, with family, with friends), and countless other variables. Douglas Worts also reminds us that "[f]ew people think of museums as a locus for transforming human attitudes and behavior in an effort to maintain (or re-establish) a

Table 1. The museums in our sample, with location, type of governance and exhibition themes. Note that the English translations of the museum names are not always a literal rendering of the Finnish names.

Name of Museum (*Finnish name*)	**Location**	**Governance**	**Main themes**
Provincial Museum of Lapland (*Lapin maakuntamuseo*), Arktikum	Rovaniemi	Regional museum	History of Finnish Lapland region
Siida – The National Museum of the Finnish Sámi (*Siida – Saamelaismuseo*)	Inari	Foundation	Sámi culture and history in Finland
Gold Prospector Museum (*Kultamuseo*)	Tankavaara	Foundation	History of gold prospecting in Lapland and beyond
Military Museum of Finland (*Sotamuseo*)	Helsinki	University museum	Military history of Finland
Finnish Airforce Museum (*Suomen Ilmavoimamuseo*)	Tikkakoski, Jyväskylä	Foundation	Finnish airforce and aviation history

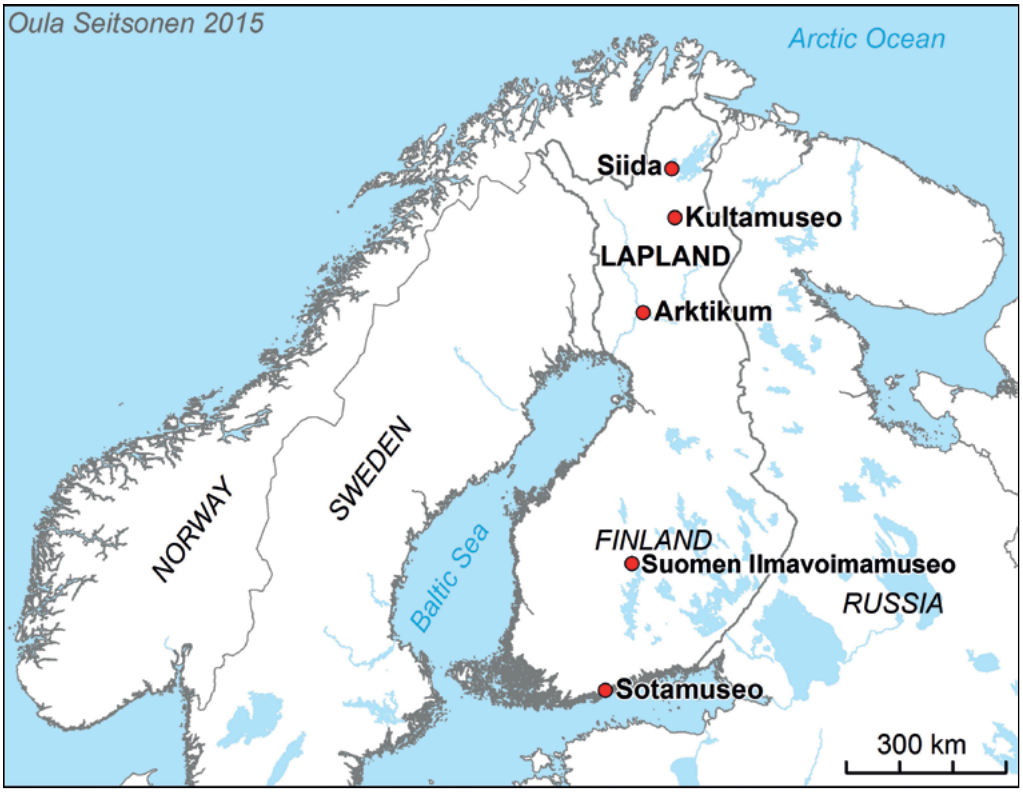


Fig. 1. Map of Finland showing the four museums in our research sample. Image: Oula Seitsonen.

balanced existence within an unpredictable world". He suggests that such goals are "idealistic", since many museums are rather regarded in the context of a touristic excursion, but that the goals are nonetheless a worthwhile aspiration (Worts 2006:42).

We have avoided visitor-studies-based evaluation in this paper. The goals of such evaluations (to assess the impact of exhibitions on visitor experiences) and the bewildering array of nuanced and complex external and internal influences which affect the visitor experience, are beyond the scope of this article. We instead focused on analysing the exhibitions ourselves, considering at the same time the ways in which one might encounter exhibition information as it relates to the Lapland War. Such an approach draws inspiration from museum-generated frameworks such as the Critical Assessment Framework (Worts 2006) and Beverley Serrell's "Framework" (Serrell 2006). These were developed for museum specialists and researchers to critique exhibitions from the point of view of how they will impact at different levels (including individual and community). While we do not follow these toolkits exactly, we support the validity of approaches in which researchers themselves analyse and reflect upon the exhibitions. Leiv Sem took a comparable approach in his

Fig. 2–3. Documenting the exhibitions at Siida (right) and the Military Museum (left). Photos: Suzie Thomas and Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto.

analysis of two Norwegian exhibitions: "By looking at the themes each of these exhibitions highlight, their presupposed ideology, and their objects and modes of display, I will investigate what relationship to the past, the community and memory, these two exhibitions express." Following an approach situated in anthropology, he further explains: "The museum must be understood through the social context, and an understanding of the social relationships can be reached through analysis of the museum's exhibitions" (Sem 2010:241).

Our focus on exhibition texts, artefacts, and associated material such as leaflets and online information could be characterized as an "artefact review". According to Amy Grack Nelson and Sarah Cohn, artefacts in this sense can include "handouts provided to visitors at the museum, signage related to the exhibition, and exhibition-related print and social media" (2015:30). Unlike some artefact reviews which may also take into account data such as meeting minutes, grant application texts and annual reports (which may or may not be publicly available), we focused exclusively on material and information available in the exhibitions.

The five museums and their main exhibitions

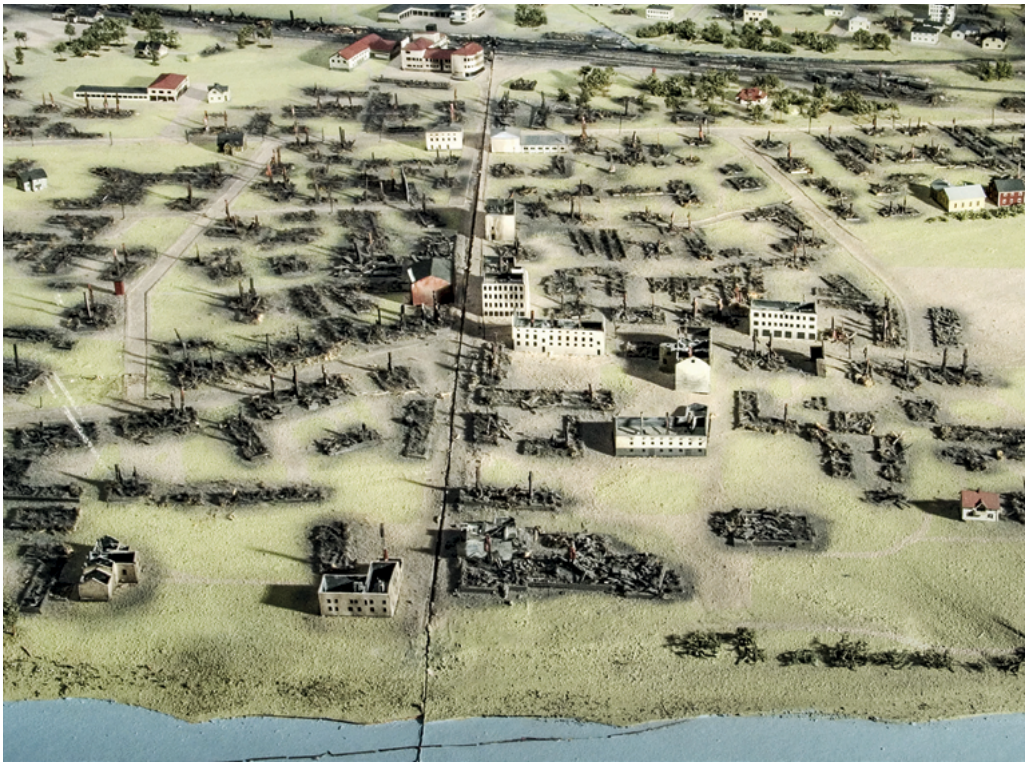
In the next sections, we analyse the different emphases and modes of display as well as ideologies that have directed the choices the museums have made in their exhibition strategies. For context, we also present a brief background and history of each museum.

The museum officially responsible for

documenting the heritage of the Second World War in Finnish Lapland is the Provincial Museum of Lapland, founded in 1975. Since 1992 it has been housed within the Arktikum building in Rovaniemi, which also hosts the Arctic Science Centre. The museum's permanent exhibition is entitled *Northern Ways,*[4] opened in 2003. It represents the Second World War history of Lapland through two major sections: the history of Rovaniemi through two town scale models; one depicting the city in 1939 just before the Second World War, and one in 1944 following the Lapland War (fig. 4), and a wall exhibit area chronicling the wider Second World War history of Lapland. The town scale models were constructed in the 1980s, in consultation with local residents, to ensure that the models would "create an authentic image of the lost townscape" (Sivula & Siro 2015:208). The contrast between the historic town before the war and the scale of devastation afterwards, with most of the city as burnt-out "scars" where structures used to be, is striking. According to museum staff, the scale models are among the most effective displays of the museums causing strong reactions in visitors, who often comment upon them later.

Another museum that has taken up the task of documenting and preserving the Second World War heritage is Siida in Inari. The

Fig. 4. Town scale model of Rovaniemi showing the Second World War destruction. Photo: Provincial Museum of Lapland.



museum was founded in 1959 by the Sámi association *Sámii Litto – Saamelaisten yhdistys ry.* When the open-air Inari Sámi Museum opened to the public in 1963, it was the Nordic region's first independent Sámi museum. The new museum building (which the museum shares with the Nature Centre of *Metsähallitus* – the Finnish Forestry Commission) and the permanent exhibition that we analysed opened in April 1998. The main exhibition introduces Sámi culture and its traditions, divided into different spheres: clothes, crafts, religion, dwelling, reindeer herding, fishing, and the organization of Sámi communities (Potinkara 2014:288). Front-of-house staff told us that the museum is planning to refresh the permanent exhibition in the near future. In addition to the main exhibition, the museum has halls for temporary exhibitions and an outdoor museum.

The third museum situated in Finnish Lapland that we studied is the Gold Prospector Museum located in the village of Tankavaara in the Lapland municipality of Sodankylä. The Gold Prospector Museum was founded in 1973 by the Gold Prospectors Association of Finnish Lapland (*Lapin Kullankaivajain Liitto*). At first the museum did not have its own building but in 1975 the first log cabin was moved to the area rented by the association. Today the museum is managed by the Gold Museum Foundation (*Kultamuseosäätiö*), founded in 2009.[5] The current museum buildings are the main building (opened in 1983), Golden World (opened in 1995) and the Härkäselkä stone and mineral exhibition building (opened in 1978). The permanent exhibition of Finnish gold history was renewed in 2011. The Golden World permanent exhibition opened in 1995, with gradual updates and renovations over the years. At the time of writing, the stone and mineral exhibition is under construction and will be open again in 2017.[6] There are no temporary exhibition spaces.

In addition to museums in Finnish Lapland, we analysed two museums focusing on different aspects of Finnish military history. The Military Museum in Helsinki was founded in 1929 as part of the National Defence University. It is therefore a university museum, but also part of the Finnish Defence Forces. At the beginning of 2016, it had exhibitions both in its main building in Kruununhaka and at Suomenlinna Sea Fortress, although our focus is on the Kruununhaka site. The museum is dedicated to Finland's wartime history and is it the largest military museum in the country. The main exhibition, entitled *From Hakkapeliittas to Peacekeepers,* opened in 2013 but closed in May 2016 due to problems with the condition of the facilities. It introduces Finnish military history from when Finland was part of Sweden up to present times, covering all three wars between 1939 and 1945. The museum opened a 70th anniversary exhibition about the Winter War – a large exhibition area featuring a life-sized trench, a bunker, and sound effects. In comparison, in the autumn of 2015, the Military Museum of Finland honoured the 70th anniversary of the end of the Lapland War by hosting a public lecture series in collaboration with the Association for Military History in Finland.

Formerly known as the Aviation Museum of Central Finland (*Keski-Suomen ilmailu-museo*), the Finnish Airforce Museum was founded in 1979. The museum building and its main exhibition was opened in 1989 (Valtonen 2004). It is located close to Jyväskylä airport in Tikkakoski. Despite its association with the Airforce, it is not part of the military, in the way that the Military History Museum is. Rather, it is administered and owned by the Foundation of the Aviation Museum of Central Finland,

which has panellists from various interested bodies such as Finavia (Finnair), the Guild of Aviation Technology and the University of Jyväskylä.[7] Hannu Valtonen (2006) and Janne Vilkuna (2011) have discussed the museality of aircraft at this museum in particular, with Vilkuna noting that cultural heritage specialists have traditionally not researched aircraft and crash sites to the same extent as "public aviation museums, wreck hunters and collectors of war souvenirs" (Vilkuna 2011:21). In Finland generally, military and war history is popular (e.g. Paasi 1997:438), and as we have noted elsewhere (e.g. Koskinen-Koivisto & Thomas 2016) amateur history enthusiasts (or hobbyists) in Lapland and elsewhere seem to be particularly interested in the research and preservation of Second World War heritage sites.

Outcomes of strategic or essentializing silence?

We found that two of the museum exhibitions in particular leave the Second World War experiences of Lapland very much in the background. Interestingly, these are museums that are geographically located near to significant Second World War remains: Siida in the village of Inari and the Gold Prospector Museum in Tankavaara. Before going into the main exhibition of Siida, visitors may enter a room that introduces Sámi history on a timeline together with the natural history of Lapland and selected world history events. The timeline mentions the Second World War, including Soviet bombing of Sámi areas and the burning of Lapland (with a picture of Inari), but dates the end of the Lapland War to the Paris Peace Treaty incorrectly, stating 1947 instead of 1945. German presence in Finnish Lapland is not mentioned at all in this section, not even in the case of major road building projects in the Sámi areas or the destruction caused by the retreating German army.

In Siida's main exhibition, the Second World War is almost invisible: The only time it is mentioned is in relation to the Skolt Sámi who lived in the Petsamo area that the Soviet Union annexed in 1944. The Skolts, who nowadays comprise the smallest Sámi group and most endangered Sámi language in Finland, were resettled to the villages of Nellim and Sevettijärvi on the eastern and north-eastern shores of Lake Inari. The texts omit to explain that the resettlement resulted in the erosion of Skolt culture and loss of livelihood that depended on their nomadic way of life and reindeer herding (Lehtola 1994, 2012:388–401).

The only place where Siida introduces the Second World War heritage and wartime remnants is in the open-air museum, which is located next to a former German prisoner-of-war camp. This connection is not mentioned in any signage. However, close to some Second World War trenches in the open-air museum area, additional information is available through a mobile application[8]. The Quick Response (QR) code leads to a webpage that provides visitors with texts and images, the basic facts about the conditions which led to the Lapland War, and evacuations in the area.

The webpage also openly discusses the lack of research carried out to date on the Second World War sites and war operations in the Sámi area, particularly with respect to German–Sámi relations:

> No research has been done on the relationship between the Sámi and the Germans, but the nature of these relations must have depended on the people involved, and on the time and district concerned. The Germans were comrades in arms on arriving in

the region, but this state of affairs had reversed by the end of the war. While the evacuation of Lapland was swift and dramatic, not everyone left the region. Many reindeer herders stayed in the fell area to tend their herds.[9]

The other significant absence in Siida's permanent exhibition that we noted was that it did not mention the trade between Sámi and Germans, which brought monetary economy to the most remote Sámi areas (discussed by Lehtola 2012:368 and mentioned in *Wir waren Freunde*). Siida's exhibition also does not address how the war affected reindeer herding. During the Second World War, the reindeer herders were taxed heavily (Lehtola 2012:367). Even afterwards, numerous reindeer were killed by explosives such as landmines.

Furthermore, the mobile app text contains information about the work of Siida's archaeologist Eija Ojanlatva, who recently began documenting military sites in Sámi areas. As this documentation has begun recently, there are not yet any publications or exhibitions available in Siida.

In the case of the Gold Prospector Museum, the war can almost be considered an "incidental character", occasionally mentioned and acknowledged in the background, but not discussed directly. There is no allusion at all to any impact that the Lapland War might have had on gold-panning activities, and the whereabouts of the gold-panning community during that time.

The Second World War is only mentioned in the *Gold History of Finland* exhibition, and even then only briefly in relation to particular case studies of notable gold prospectors. For example, two German brothers, Werner and Otto Thiede, came to Lapland for gold prospecting and built a villa known as "Thiede's Cabin". The interpretation panel notes that the Thiede brothers, like many other outsiders, arrived in 1936 after news broke of a major gold discovery by local Sámi inhabitants. The text notes that Werner Thiede was expelled from Finland in 1939:

> The official reason for this action was the mining law, which did not allow foreigners to use citizens of Finland as their mediators. Thiede had broken this rule while Jari Uggla, a Finnish lawyer served as his agent. The threat of war and German state policy were the ghosts in the background.[10]

Thiede's Cabin in Hopiaoja is featured in a photograph on one of the panels, which indirectly suggests that the cabin still exists by referring to how it is known in the present text. In fact the cabin is located directly next to the Gold Village (fig. 5), and we know both from the aftermath of the Lapland War as a whole (in which very little built material survived) but also from informal discussions with the museum staff, that the cabin was exceptionally rare in that it survived the mass destruction of the war. We heard (also informally, not from the official museum text) that people believed at the time that the cabin had been spared destruction because Thiede had contacts in the German military.

There is an interpretation panel describing the Lemmenjoki gold rush, which started in 1945, noting only that: "Young men, retired recently from the war, were eager to make their fortune in the gold fields". Several of the individual gold prospectors whose stories are featured in the exhibition were born in the early twentieth century. All of their panels feature a brief timeline of their major life events, and while nothing is said of their activities or indeed the fate of their properties during the war itself, the period shortly after the end of the war is often introduced with the

Fig. 5. Thiede's Cabin, Tankavaara. A rare survivor of the Lapland War. Photo: Suzie Thomas.

brief wording "after the war…" Similarly, on the same panel as the information about Thiede, the activities of Lapin Mineraali Oy mining company are described as being "interrupted for a while because of war".[11]

In theorizing the politics of commemoration, Jay Winter (2010) has divided the silences around war into three categories: 1) Liturgic silence motivated by loss and grief, 2) strategic and political silence that aims at balancing the contradictory ideologies and views of the past, and 3) essentializing silence that indicates who is entitled to speak about the memories of war (cf. Sääskilahti 2014.) In the case of Siida, the silence might be interpreted as strategic silence. The Nazi ideology and its hierarchies of races are not discussed at all. Also the material destruction during the Lapland War and its effects on Sámi livelihoods are downplayed and brought up only briefly and only in the case of the Skolt Sámi. This choice might reflect the political atmosphere of the 1990s (when the exhibition opened), when different ethnic Sámi groups started to claim their rights and identities, raising legal questions related to land ownership and use (e.g. Potinkara 2015:15–16). In the case of the Gold Prospector Museum, the Second World War only appears

in a few material pieces/remains (such as a *Rauenschlepper Ost* vehicle which apparently came to Finland during the war but was used for transportation in the Lemmenjoki gold field from 1951 to 1953). The Second World War is mentioned only in passing, and it would seem from the information in the museum that, aside from notable expulsions such as that of Werner Thiede, most prospectors simply left their activities during the war, and returned afterwards. The museum does not seem to regard the narrative of the events or destruction of the Second World War as part of its interpretative responsibility.

The price of the war – exhibiting the darker side of history

Both the military historical museums and the Provincial Museum of Lapland discuss the Lapland War and its consequences. The Finnish Military Museum and the Provincial Museum of Lapland both have separate exhibition spaces for the Lapland War, and introduce the events and causes of the Finnish-German co-belligerency and the later war in a straightforward manner.

One panel of the Finnish Military Museum's exhibition is entitled "The price of the war", listing the material losses and casualties across Finland, across all three of the wars. The destruction of Lapland is acknowledged along with the territorial losses of Petsamo and Karelia. Furthermore, the panel mentions that the Germans set numerous landmines in Lapland.[12] One of the most remarkable artefacts on display is a uniform which belonged to Eduard Dietl (1890–1944), who commanded the 20th Mountain Division of the German army that was placed in Lapland. Dietl was very popular both among the local residents of Finnish Lapland and his own troops and arguably a "personality cult" has evolved around him.[13] It is therefore perhaps understandable although also possibly problematic that there is no mention of the fact that Dietl was also a dedicated Nazi and one of Hitler's favourite generals. Instead, the interpretation describes the journey of the uniform itself: how it was found in Rovaniemi in 1944 and brought to the museum without the badges of honour which he wore at the time of death. German veterans of the 20th Mountain Division regained the badges in Germany and later donated them to the museum.

The primary focus of the Finnish Airforce Museum's exhibition spaces – comprising a large permanent exhibition area within which there are limited spaces for occasional temporary exhibits – is the history and aircraft connected to the Finnish Airforce. The museum exhibits some of the aircraft as wreckage, rather than restoring them fully to working order – a practice which itself has been critiqued for its impact on authenticity (cf. Mann 1994). The Brewster Model 239, a key exhibit connected to pilot Lauri Pekuri, which was shot down over the Soviet Union and later found by a hobby diver in 1998, has been deliberately displayed in its "wrecked" state. This approach enhances to the aircraft's testimony of having seen wartime combat action. In another area of the museum, along part of the wall of the hangar, aviation "war junk" found in the Lapland wilderness is displayed as it was found – again indicating the destructive and damaging nature of war through the detritus it leaves behind (fig. 6). However, the focus is entirely on aviation equipment and objects (for example identifying which airplane a particular piece of wreckage comes from), and their salvage, with no further discussion of the social, economic or other impacts of the Second World War.

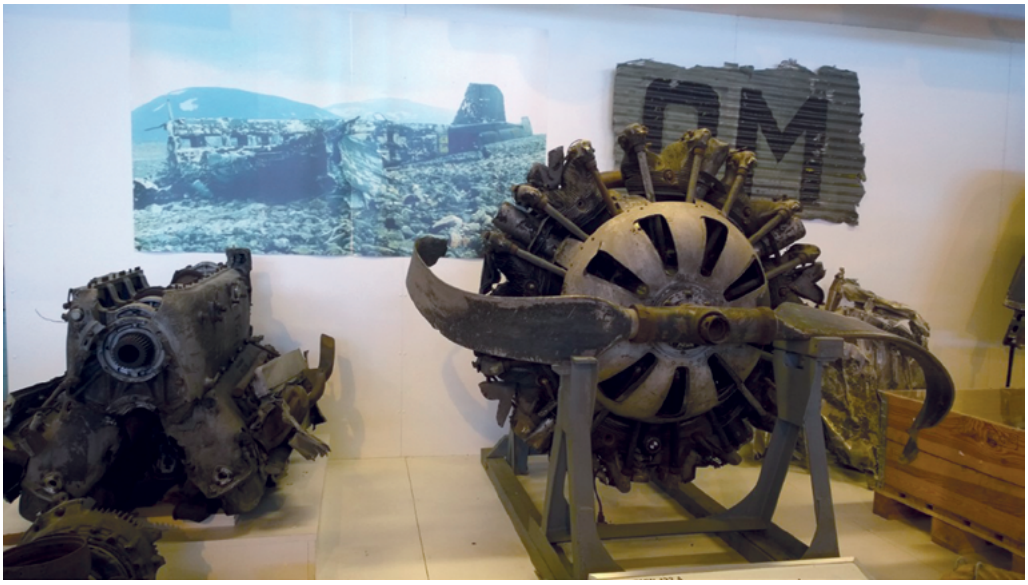


Fig. 6. Some of the aircraft wreckage from the Lapland War with photograph of the wrecked aircraft in situ in Lapland in the background, exhibited at the Finnish Airforce Museum. Photo: Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto.

Discussion

It is important to note that, as institutions with a particular operational role of displaying material culture in a way that is accessible, visually appealing, and above all safe for museum visitors to experience, there are also pragmatic influences that affect display strategies. This is perhaps easiest to identify in our case studies with the Finnish Airforce Museum, in which complete aircraft – large artefacts requiring lots of space – take a central position for obvious reasons. Here the examples of "war junk" from the Lapland War are physically marginalized to a side display along part of the hangar wall, but this seems to be for practical and space-related reasons, rather than any deliberate attempt to downplay this material culture or what it represents.

In many ways the Provincial Museum of Lapland covered the areas that might be expected due to the museum's location in Rovaniemi (and the considerable damage wrought on the city during the Lapland War). It is understandable and almost expected that there would be a visual depiction of the scale of the city's devastation; Anna Sivula and Susanna Siro note that from the beginning, "it was obvious that two town scale models should be made" (2015:208). Furthermore as the regional museum, it was also unsurprising to find coverage of the Second World War in Finland, especially Lapland.

In relation to Siida, and to a certain extent the sections of the Provincial Museum of Lapland that covered Sámi culture and history, it was surprising to find the Second World War mentioned only incidentally. This was especially the case regarding the Skolt Sámi, who lost their traditional territories. The impact of the mass evacuations on traditional Sámi practices

and identity were significant: they were quickly introduced to the Finnish language and to new kinds of clothing and customs. Although most Sámi community members did relatively well in adapting to the new conditions, many fell ill and even died on the evacuation journeys due to lack of immune resistance to diseases that were unknown in Sámi areas (Lehtola 1994). Other larger-scale effects of war on Sámi life included the road-building projects and extensive logging which were initiated by Germans and continued by Finns in the post-war years (Lehtola 2012:368). We noted that other "dark" history related to colonial heritage, such as the forced boarding schools, were not mentioned in Siida's exhibition. This gave us an impression of a sanitized and "neutral" narrative in Siida, which downplays the discontinuities and fragmentation of Sámi culture. We found plenty of information concerning the Second World War trenches in the website text associated with the mobile application. However, one requires the correct device and internet access to reach this information, otherwise it is inaccessible.

In the Gold Prospector Museum the war seems even more incidental, mentioned only in passing. Meanwhile the Military Museum of Finland gives greatest emphasis to the military aspects of war history and experience, and the exhibition gives greater emphasis to the Winter and Continuation Wars than to the Lapland War. This may reflect partly the museum's location in Helsinki, in the south of the country, but also the greater emphasis, noted elsewhere (e.g. Kivimäki 2012:483; Herva 2014:300), given in the Finnish national narrative to these two wars (and especially the Winter War) against the Soviet Union. This more emphatic treatment of the Winter War is also reflected in the museum's commemorative activities for both wars: the Winter War's 70th anniversary was marked with a new permanent exhibition, while the Lapland War's 70th anniversary received a short public lecture series. We correctly anticipated that the problems related to cooperation with the Third Reich, as well as the nationalistic ideas of Greater Finland during the period of the Continuation War (cf. Paasi 1997) are not discussed at all at this museum.

Susannah Eckersley noted that in curatorial approaches that might be considered to be attempting to give "'neutral' historical presentation", there is the risk that by not addressing the emotional impact of particular events, a museum possibly "underplays the issue to non-specialist audiences, who may leave with little or no understanding of the wider significance of the facts described so succinctly" (Eckersley 2014:115). In the Finnish context, we potentially see parallels between this "neutral" curatorial approach and that of history and social studies teaching in the secondary school curriculum: "The Finnish social studies teachers (they also teach history) gauge that in social studies teaching, the focus is on factual knowledge and the questions about values are addressed substantially less" (Löfström 2014:533). Löfström recommends that "the history curriculum could explicitly encourage the teachers to discuss with their students the political and moral implications of historical analyses, for example in cases of painful past" (2014:535). It is logical to consider museum interpretation as related forms of public pedagogy through which culture both "mediates" and "shapes" history (Giroux 2004:62). In this context, presenting only factual information, or as we saw in some cases, merely alluding to these "facts" indirectly, could be interpreted as a means of avoiding too close an engagement with potentially painful or difficult subjects in cultural and social history.

Conclusion

We have discussed the presence (and absence) of the 1944–1945 Lapland War in five Finnish museums. While we do not expect all museums to feature the war as a central theme of their exhibitions, we maintain that it is problematic not to mention with at least some detail such a major event, which is relevant locally but also internationally as part of the larger world conflict. In the case of two specialist museums located in the area of Lapland, we have interpreted this silence as a strategic choice of highlighting other aspects of the local past, such as Sámi traditions and identity, and as an essentializing silence in the case of which the issue is neglected and left to others to address. We have suggested that the approach adopted within the museums reflects the wider characteristics of Finland's engagement with the more difficult aspects of its past and agency in the Second World War in what might be framed as a "neutral" or fact-based approach. The exhibitions we analysed acknowledge the destruction caused by the Lapland War, but do not discuss the interaction and cooperation between the local people and the Germans (although this was addressed in *Wir waren Freunde* at the Provincial Museum of Lapland). It seems that despite interest within local communities (cf. Koskinen-Koivisto & Thomas 2016), discussion of this particular aspect of the war remains ancillary to other themes, certainly within our sample of Finnish museums.

Notes

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2. The Winter War began with the Soviet invasion of Finland on 30 November 1939.
3. Herva *et al.* 2015, http://blogs.helsinki.fi/lapland-dark-heritage (accessed 1 December 2015).
4. Arktikum Museum and Arctic Science Centre, undated. http://www.arktikum.fi/EN/exhibitions/permanent-exhibitions.html (accessed 1 December 2015).
5. Gold Prospector Museum, undated. http://www.kultamuseo.fi/museo/pages/en/gold-museum/foundation.php?lang=EN (accessed 1 December 2015).
6. Heli Heinäaho pers. comm., 27 June 2016.
7. Finnish Airforce Museum, http://airforcemuseum.fi/museum-information/administration (accessed 27 July 2016).
8. Siida, undated. http://tarinasoitin.fi/saamelaismuseosiida (accessed 1 December 2015).
9. Siida, undated. http://tarinasoitin.fi/saamelaismuseosiida (accessed 1 December 2015).
10. Gold History of Finland exhibition, Gold Prospector Museum. Visited 11 August 2015.
11. Gold History of Finland exhibition, Gold Prospector Museum. Visited 11 August 2015.
12. This and other panels, we discovered, open up to reveal further information in the form of a short summary of the events of the Lapland War. However, this is in some ways also "hidden", in the sense that it is difficult to discover, with museum staff even remarking to us that most visitors do not realize that the panels open up. There is another mention of the landmines planted during the Lapland War in a separate

section of the museum, away from the war history.

13. Personality cults have been best found in political cultures that can be labelled as dictatorial or totalitarian. They also appear in democratic regimes in which great statesmen, soldiers or sportsmen, for example, are adored. In the case of Finland, strong nationalistic personality cults have evolved around the figures of Marshall C.G.E. Mannerheim and Finnish President U.K. Kekkonen (see Halmesvirta 2009).

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